

# THE LONDON NAVAL CONFERENCE

January 21—April 22, 1930.

by

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## PART I POLITICAL ISSUES

SINCE the close of the World War three great international conferences have met for the purpose of limiting naval armaments. At Washington in 1921-1922 the five principal sea powers agreed to restrict the building of battleships and aircraft carriers. At Geneva in 1927 three of these powers failed in an effort to extend the Washington treaty provisions to cruisers, destroyers and submarines. At London in 1930 delegates of the United States, Great Britain, Japan, France and Italy met again. This time their task was two-fold: to review the Washington treaty provisions governing battleships and aircraft carriers, and to extend the principle of limitation to all other categories of naval combat craft. After protracted negotiations this third conference adjourned on April 22, 1930, having concluded a treaty for restricting naval establishments within greater or lesser limits during the next six years. The issues confronting the London conference and the results of the treaty are reviewed in the following pages.

The preparatory stages of most international conferences are of capital importance: ultimate success or failure may depend on the extent to which difficulties have been foreseen in advance and the thoroughness with which obstacles have been removed. The London Naval Conference was no exception to the rule.

As the preliminaries to the London Conference have been reviewed at length in a previous issue of the *Information Service*,<sup>1</sup> however, the briefest outline will suffice to recall here the steps which led to the invita-

tion extended to the four other powers by the British government on October 7. These steps and the situations from which they developed may be set forth as follows:

1. *The Speech of Ambassador Hugh Gibson before the Preparatory Commission at Geneva on April 22, 1929.*<sup>2</sup> It was this speech, reflecting as it did the views of President Hoover, that offered a new basis for solution of the Anglo-American naval controversy and led to renewed diplomatic negotiations between the two greatest naval powers. The Preparatory Commission had been unable to complete the second reading of a draft treaty for general disarmament because of the differences between the naval powers, particularly the British-American difference over cruisers and the divergent methods of disarmament proposed by France on the one hand and Britain and the United States on the other. Mr. Gibson suggested methods for adjustment of both controversies, basing his plea for a new approach on the recent signing of the Kellogg pact for the renunciation of war. The Preparatory Commission recommended that the naval powers examine these proposals among themselves.

2. *The Anglo-American negotiations.* With the return of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald at the head of the second British Labour government on May 30, 1929, negotiations for settlement of the British-American cruiser controversy were begun. The negotiations continued in London throughout the summer of 1929 and culminated in the visit

1. Cf. "Anglo-American Naval Understanding," F. P. A. *Information Service*, Vol. V, No. 10.

2. League of Nations, Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference, *Minutes of the Sixth Session* (First Part), Geneva, 1929, p. 56-58.

of the British Prime Minister to Washington in October. With the exception of a few technical points an agreement in principle was reached on all outstanding issues.

What the Hoover-MacDonald agreement proposed was a settlement of the cruiser controversy which had wrecked the Geneva conference of 1927. At Geneva the United States had asked for parity between the fleets of the two countries at a tonnage level of from 250,000 to 300,000 tons, each country having the right to build the type of vessel best suited to its own needs. Because of its lack of naval bases, the United States preferred 10,000-ton cruisers with 8-inch guns. The British government, on the other hand, preferred small 6-inch-gun cruisers and asked for a minimum of 70 cruisers, which it regarded as indispensable for the protection of the far-flung trade routes of the empire. It proposed that the cruiser class be divided into two categories—large 8-inch-gun ships, limited as to number, and small 6-inch-gun ships, limited as to size. No satisfactory compromise could be found.

The Hoover-MacDonald agreement adjusted the difference by allowing the United States a superiority in large cruisers, and the British a superiority in small cruisers. This provisional settlement, which came to be known as the "Rapidan agreement" because of its conclusion during the talks between the President and the Prime Minister on the banks of the Rapidan River, narrowed the margin of difference to three 8-inch-gun cruisers. Great Britain abandoned its demand for a total of 70 cruisers,<sup>3</sup> and agreed, on certain conditions, to a minimum of 50 ships totaling 339,000 tons. Fifteen of these were to be 8-inch-gun cruisers, while 35 were to be smaller 6-inch-gun vessels. The United States requested 21 large 8-inch-gun cruisers and enough smaller ones to bring the total to 315,000 tons. The British government proposed that instead of 21 large 8-inch-gun ships the United States should have 18. President Hoover and Prime Minister MacDonald agreed to leave the final settlement of this difference of three cruisers to the conference at London.

3. While the British government had demanded 70 cruisers at Geneva, it had not actually planned to build to this level. The naval program of the Conservative government in 1929 called for approximately 50 cruisers by 1942. (Cf. Debate on Naval Estimates, *House of Commons Debates*, March 4, 1929, 5th Series, Vol. 226, No. 71, Col. 1309.)

3. *The position of France.* Despite explanations from London and Washington that these negotiations were not directed against any other State but were preliminary to a wider agreement, no comparable negotiations were undertaken with France. For ten years France had resisted the Anglo-American method of limitation, and at Geneva had put forward a thesis which would make the degree of disarmament depend on the extent of security. Furthermore, France held that land, air and naval disarmament should be considered as a whole, not separately, and that naval strength should be measured by "global" or total tonnage and not by categories. Informal conversations between Great Britain and France had dealt with the question of global tonnage, but had avoided the issue of security. On December 20 the French government forwarded to the other naval powers a memorandum setting forth its position and emphasizing the following points:

That the size of the French naval establishment must correspond with national needs, the size of the colonial empire, the length of trade routes, etc.

That naval needs may be modified by any guarantee of security giving effect to the League system of collective action against an aggressor.

That the Kellogg pact in its present state cannot be regarded as increasing security.

That naval limitation cannot be achieved solely by the application of mathematical ratios.

That the work at Geneva has revealed the interdependence of land, air, and naval armaments.

No attempt to discuss these significant issues was made before the conference in London.

#### 4. *Franco-Italian Negotiations.*

Diplomatic conversations between France and Italy were begun following acceptance by both powers of the British invitation to the London conference. Italy, following a policy announced in 1928, declared its readiness to reduce naval armaments to any level, however low, providing that level was not exceeded by any other Continental European power. France took the position that naval parity with Italy would in fact mean inferiority for France, as the French fleet must patrol three seas while the Italian fleet is confined to the Mediterranean. In its memorandum of December 20 the French

government suggested, as a possible solution of a regional problem, a Mediterranean pact along the lines of the Four-Power Pacific Treaty of the Washington conference. The issue remained unsettled, however, when the London conference convened in January.

#### 5. *The Japanese Position.*

On its way to the London conference, the Japanese delegation stopped at Washington in December, and private conversations with the American delegation began. The Japanese claim for a ratio of 70 per cent in auxiliary surface craft, and particularly in the category of 10,000-ton cruisers, was explained to the American delegates and to the press. Points of difference were left for solution at the conference.

To recapitulate: The preliminary negotiations had resulted in a virtual solution of outstanding differences between the United States and Great Britain and a tentative tonnage agreement based on the Anglo-American thesis of disarmament. They had clarified, but not settled the American-Japanese differences. They had resulted in no solution of the French issue of security and had found no basis for a compromise between France and Italy.

#### METHODS OF PROCEDURE

In this setting the London Naval Conference convened on January 21, 1930 in the Royal Gallery of the House of Lords. The scene was in striking contrast to the opening of the Washington conference eight years before, when Charles Evans Hughes startled the assembled delegates with the boldness of his plan for scrapping almost half of the battleships of the great powers. If a similar opportunity existed at London, it was not capitalized. Instead, confronted by delicate and unresolved difficulties, the five principal delegates felt their way cautiously through speeches designed to conciliate, but not to commit. By common consent the dangerous issues were avoided, or reserved for the intimate contacts to be afforded by the method of private negotiation. Uncompromising positions taken in full view of the public had wrecked the best efforts of statesmen before and should be avoided at all costs. By patience, by com-

promise, by frankness, but above all by the privacy which protects, the London conference might perhaps surmount the obstacles which loomed so large. This, at least, was the theory on which the conference pinned its hopes.

And for this reason the record of the London Naval Conference is not to be found in the minutes of the plenary sessions, nor in the proceedings of the committees and sub-committees. The historian sifting the documentary residue of the formal sessions will find little to reward him for his search. The conference was in session for three months and one day. Within this time it met formally on only six occasions, including the opening and closing ceremonies. For weeks at a time it pursued its course without a public meeting of any kind. It set up committees and sub-committees to which technical questions were referred and from which technical questions were reported. But the vital issues on which the outcome rested seldom reached the committee room. Political issues, such as the question of security and the Franco-Italian differences, and vital tonnage discussions relating to the cruiser settlement and the Japanese ratio were left to the principal delegates meeting in private either at St. James's Palace, at 10 Downing Street, in the Prime Minister's room in the House of Commons or at the headquarters of the several delegations. No formal minutes were kept of these important conversations and no record of what transpired will be incorporated in the final official report. At one of the last meetings of the heads of delegations it was decided that the conference record should include only the minutes of the plenary sessions, and the reports of the First Committee on which final decisions were based.

In the course of its three months' negotiations the London conference passed through three distinct phases: the first, or preliminary stage, lasting from January 21 to February 17, when the fall of the Tardieu Cabinet forced a suspension of activities; the interlude, between February 18 and March 6 when, owing to the absence of the French delegates, discussions were confined to matters concerning the United States, Japan and Great Britain; and the final, or political phase, when attempts were made to

deal with the question of European security and the differences between France and Italy. Failure to adjust the Franco-Italian differences during the final stage was re-

sponsible for the decision to confine the limitation sections of the treaty to the three powers—the United States, Great Britain and Japan.

### THE FIRST PHASE

Before the fall of the French government on February 17, the conference had held three plenary sessions, had reached a partial settlement of the cruiser issue, and had found a provisional compromise between the Anglo-American method of limitation by categories and the French "global tonnage" method. Four of the five powers had stated their positions in formal memoranda given out to the press. The French delegation had produced its naval building program calling for a total of 724,000 tons by 1936. The British and American delegations had submitted figures for limitation of auxiliary ships as between their own countries. The Japanese and Americans had begun a comparison of their respective proposals. The Italian delegation, in plenary session, had declined to produce figures until the fundamental question of ratios (involving Italian claims to parity with France) had been dealt with satisfactorily.

Thus, at the termination of the first stage, the conference had just approached the problem which it had met to resolve: the limitation of naval programs. But the question of how national requirements could be reduced had not yet been faced.

The French memorandum, published March 14, declared that the French navy had been reduced by more than 450,000 tons since 1914, and that the present naval budget was 18 per cent below the pre-war budget. No other power, the memorandum stated, could show a comparable reduction.

The state of the French fleet on January 1, 1930 was set forth in a table which estimated the total tonnage in all classes, including over-age vessels, at 681,808 tons. If the other powers represented at the conference were to take as the basis for agreement the establishment of building programs extending from 1930 to 1936, France would be willing to accept this method, subject to the approval of the French Parliament. In this case, the French navy would total 724,479

tons in 1936. To reach this figure France would build 240,000 tons during the next six years—or 40,000 tons annually—the amount provided in the present French naval statute. Approximately 82 per cent of the tonnage laid down would be for replacement; the remainder would represent new building. This program could not be reduced, the memorandum implied, unless the guarantees of security were increased.<sup>4</sup>

The Italian objection was recorded at the third plenary session, held on January 30, when Signor Grandi declined to proceed with the examination of methods, which, he declared, were of secondary importance. While the Italian delegation was prepared to take part in such a discussion, it would not commit itself until two fundamental questions had been settled: the determination of ratios, and the maximum levels of tonnage.

"I am fully convinced," Signor Grandi declared, "that only by facing squarely the difficulties to which I have called your attention can we hope to attain our purpose, which is surely not that of limiting upward, but of reducing armaments to the lowest possible level."<sup>5</sup>

The Italian warning was duly recorded, and the conference proceeded with questions of method. Italy again recalled the importance of adjusting the question of ratios, however, in a memorandum issued February 19.<sup>6</sup> The memorandum emphasized the unfavorable geographical position of Italy, and restated the willingness of the Italian delegation to accept "the lowest tonnage levels," provided they were not exceeded by any other power. In private conversations it was understood that Italy would allow France a certain superiority, including battleships and over-age vessels, during the next six years if the principle of "parity" were acknowledged by France.

4. *The Times* (London), March 15, 1930.

5. London Naval Conference, *Provisional Minutes of the Third Plenary Session*.

6. *The Times* (London), March 20, 1930.



## THE SECOND PHASE

During the absence of the French delegation, the American, British and Japanese delegates continued informal conversations on matters of concern to themselves and by March 6 had laid the framework of an agreement to be fitted into the five-power treaty which it was still hoped would be signed. (See Part II). The fundamental political situation, however, had not changed. It was apparent that if full agreement was to be reached the French program of 724,000 tons would have to be reduced, and the issue of Italian parity solved. It was likewise apparent that the French program could not be reduced unless the issue of security was discussed.

The French delegation had not stated precisely what measures of security it would require in order to reduce its naval program. In the memorandum issued during the first phase of the conference, it was stated on behalf of France that "she remains, as she repeatedly declared herself to be, ready to consider favorably any form of agreement for a mutual guarantee of security the effect of which would be to transform the absolute requirements of each power into relative requirements."<sup>7</sup>

This was generally interpreted to mean either a security treaty of the Locarno type—under which Great Britain agreed to come to the aid of either France or Germany in the case of unprovoked attack—or a treaty of the type discussed at Geneva in 1928. The League Committee on Arbitration and Security had prepared a number of "draft" treaties in that year which provided for mutual assistance against any State which violated its obligation not to attack or invade the territory of the other parties.<sup>8</sup>

While no informal discussion of security had begun before the return of the French delegation on March 6, a powerful section of the British press had warned the government not to increase the existing commitments of Great Britain under the Covenant of the League of Nations. Under Article XVI of the Covenant Great Britain is al-

ready committed to "the severance of all trade or financial relations, the prohibition of all intercourse . . . etc." between its nationals and those of a State which has gone to war in violation of the Covenant. The League Council, under Article XVI, is further empowered to "recommend" to the several governments concerned what military measures should be taken to protect the Covenant of the League.

### DIVERGENT INTERPRETATIONS OF ARTICLE XVI

Almost since the inception of the League there has been uncertainty as to the actual weight of the recommendations of the Council. In 1921 the Assembly adopted a resolution to the effect that each League member should judge for itself whether the Covenant had been violated and whether it should impose an economic boycott. Moreover, to satisfy the misgivings of Germany upon its entrance into the League, the powers signing the Locarno treaty had declared in 1925 that while they were not in a position to speak for the League, they had no hesitation in stating for themselves that they regarded each League member as being "bound to cooperate loyally and effectively in support of the Covenant and in resistance to any act of aggression to an extent which is compatible with its military situation and takes its geographical position into account."<sup>9</sup>

These two interpretations were regarded by many European countries, including France, as weakening the obligations originally assumed under Article XVI of the League Covenant. The British government had let it be known that it had no objection to clarifying these obligations, but it hesitated to begin discussions with the French delegation as long as the position of the United States was uncertain.

In agreeing to parity with the United States, the British government had in effect given up the power of enforcing its own interpretation of the rules of international law

7. *Ibid.*, February 15, 1930.

8. League of Nations, *Pacific Settlement of International Disputes. Non-Aggression and Mutual Assistance*, C.536.M.163, 1928, IX.

9. Locarno Conference, 1925, *Final Protocol of the Locarno Conference, 1925 (and Annexes)*, Cmd. 2523, H. M. Stationery Office.

at sea. If the British fleet was ever to be used in enforcing a blockade against an "aggressor," it would run the risk of coming into conflict with the United States, which, according to some authorities, would be free, under its rights as a neutral, to trade with a violator of the Kellogg pact and the League Covenant. This possibility of conflict with the United States has long been a source of concern to Great Britain. During the conference the British delegation showed itself loath to discuss the question of League sanctions with France unless some assurance were first forthcoming from the American delegation. It was not proposed that the United States should enter a European security treaty; it was not proposed that the United States should commit itself to support League sanctions. It was suggested, informally and privately, on the other hand, that the United States should declare its willingness to "consult" with other powers in the event of violation of the Kellogg pact, without assuming other obligations. Such a declaration, it was explained, would not be intended to satisfy the French demands for security, but to permit the British delegation to discuss the issue of security with the French delegation. Un-

less such a discussion could begin, the five-power conference was doomed to failure.

#### POSITION OF AMERICAN DELEGATION

The position of the American delegation on this point had remained obscure up to the return of the French delegation on March 6. American correspondents, however, were given the impression in February that the delegation was considering the possibility of some form of consultative pact. At an informal private luncheon on February 17 for a group of American correspondents, the head of the American delegation had been understood to say that at the time of the Russo-Chinese crisis in November 1929 the Washington administration had felt the need of some machinery to implement the Kellogg pact. The absence of any means for consultation in time of crisis had proved embarrassing. Moreover, he added, the United States had long favored the principle of consultation.

As a result of this informal luncheon, American correspondents in London wrote, on their own responsibility, that the question of a consultative pact would probably be considered sympathetically on the return of the French delegation.<sup>10</sup>

### THE THIRD PHASE

Following the formation of the second Tardieu Cabinet and with the return of M. Briand at the head of a reconstituted French delegation, the conference was confronted with the political issue of security which it had avoided in the first stage and postponed during the interlude. Tonnage figures for the three powers—the United States, Great Britain and Japan—had been brought to a point where agreement seemed possible. The problem of adjusting the French program to these levels and the problem of Franco-Italian parity remained.

On Saturday, March 8, there began a series of highly important political conversations extending over the week-end. M. Briand conferred with Mr. Stimson at Stanmore and with Mr. MacDonald at Chequers. What he proposed has never been disclosed.

But on Sunday evening, March 9, after the departure of the French Foreign Minister, Mr. MacDonald broadcast an address to America in which he implied a British refusal to grant further military guarantees of security to France. The Prime Minister declared in part:

"We shall not agree to base any treaty which may result from the Naval Conference on entangling military alliance. That would undo in spirit and in policy the work of the conference. But some of us will strive to secure as an essential part of the agreement a pledge of goodwill and pacific intention similar to that made by the President of the United States and myself after we had convinced ourselves that a naval agreement was possible.

"Such a pledge ought to allow programs to be reduced to a minimum if we have any confidence in each other's signatures."<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup>. Cf. dispatch by Edwin L. James, published in *New York Times*, February 19, 1930.

<sup>11</sup>. *New York Times*, March 10, 1930.

## AMERICAN AVERSION TO CONSULTATIVE PACT

That the unwillingness of the British Prime Minister to begin discussions of security with the French delegation was not unrelated to the position of the American delegation was suggested two days later by information coming from American headquarters. On March 11, at a tea to which a select group of American correspondents had been invited, Mr. Stimson declared that as far as the United States was concerned the possibility of a consultative pact as part of a naval treaty had been excluded. Such a pact, he explained, might be taken as a moral obligation by the United States to render aid to France, particularly if France had reduced its navy in return for a consultative agreement.

Reports from Washington indicated that the decision was based on doubts of the administration that any treaty including a consultative provision could secure the support of two-thirds of the Senate. Isolationist senators had not hesitated to express their condemnation of a "political" pact when the first reports from London began to indicate that a consultative treaty was possible, and the opposition of other senators was feared.<sup>12</sup> This opposition had apparently stiffened by March 9.<sup>13</sup>

Another opinion, however, had been expressed in a cable to Mr. Stimson, signed by 1,200 American citizens. This cable, urging that the original purpose of the conference be not forgotten and appealing for "reduction, not mere limitation," had stressed the importance "of taking steps at the London conference to utilize the principle of joint conference in the case of disputes which otherwise might lead to war." Editorial opinion throughout the United States was divided, with the Hearst press, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Washington Post* and others opposed to a consultative pact, and such papers as the *New York Times*, *The World* (New York), the Scripps-Howard chain, the *Baltimore Sun* and the *Christian Science Monitor* favoring a promise to consult. A majority of newspapers, according to summaries cabled to the American delegation in

London, apparently favored a consultative pact if the latter would insure a five-power agreement together with reduction.

## POLITICAL CONVERSATIONS BANNED

In London the immediate effect of Mr. Stimson's declaration was to close the door on further discussion of the fundamental issue of French security. The reception accorded the statement in the British press was mixed. Certain newspapers, led by the Conservative *Daily Telegraph* of London, welcomed a move which made it impossible for Prime Minister MacDonald to continue "dangerous" political conversations with M. Briand.<sup>15</sup> The *Sunday Times*, also a Conservative organ, declared that the refusal to face political problems had eliminated the last hope of a five-power agreement. Mr. Wickham Steed, in a signed editorial on March 16, wrote:

"The conference began by trying to dodge trouble. Without asking why navies should be cut down, or what they would have to do in a warless world, it sought to decide how to cut them down. But it soon found that the question 'Why?' had to be answered, that it was harder than the question 'How?'. . . .

"If the United States or Great Britain had said 'Yes' to all or any of these inquiries [put by France], France would have cut down her naval 'needs' and would have come more or less into line with the United States and Great Britain."<sup>16</sup>

The opinion of Mr. Steed may or may not have been justified by the existing situation. The fact remains that a fundamental issue had been excluded and that the conference rapidly drifted toward a dangerous impasse. M. Briand, the day following the Stimson statement, informed the press that the idea of a political pact had been excluded, and that as far as he was concerned there was nothing left to do in London.<sup>17</sup> During the next few days French and British delegates, with the assistance of Mr. Dwight Morrow of the American delegation, were engaged in a critical examination of the French figures of tonnage to determine whether, by excluding certain over-age ships, a satisfactory basis of comparison could be found. The results were not officially announced,

12. *Ibid.*, February 16, 1930.

13. *Ibid.*, March 10, 1930.

15. *Daily Telegraph* (London), March 12, 1930.

16. *The Sunday Times* (London), March 16, 1930.

17. *Manchester Guardian*, March 13, 1930.

although M. Dumesnil of the French delegation issued an explanatory note on the previous French memorandum in which he showed that the French tonnage in 1936 would be 713,500 tons instead of 724,000, as stated earlier.<sup>18</sup>

On March 14 reports were current that the United States and Japan had reached an understanding satisfactory to both delegations, and that in consequence the basis of a three-power limitation agreement had been definitely established. These reports were confirmed a few days later, although final announcement of a three-power agreement was not made until all hope of a five-power pact had been abandoned. The French delegation, however, faced with the prospect of being isolated by the three powers or blamed for the failure to reach a full agreement, apparently sought to keep the conference alive.

A final effort to adjust the French program to the levels desired by the other powers, without introducing the factor of security, was made during the week-end of March 15. M. Tardieu, who had returned to London for the last time, conferred with Mr. MacDonald at Chequers on Sunday, March 16. The only statement of what took place during the four-hour conference between the two Prime Ministers was given out by M. Tardieu, who said that they had examined the whole situation together.<sup>19</sup> Reports that a possible basis of compromise between France and Italy had been considered were denied by official British spokesmen.

#### CONFERENCE THREATENED WITH BREAKDOWN

That no solution of the existing deadlock had been found, however, was indicated by events of the following week. On March 17 M. Tardieu returned to Paris. On March 20 M. Briand also returned, and by the end of the week only a handful of French experts remained in London. It was denied that France had any intention of abandoning the conference. At the same time reports from Paris indicated that the French government saw no basis for reducing its

tonnage estimates without discussing security, and no solution of the Italian claim for parity.

Prime Minister MacDonald, as chairman of the conference, was confronted with the possibility of a complete breakdown in the negotiations. He was not in a position to make concessions to the French as long as the United States refused to consider any form of consultative pact. British opinion, if the daily press reflected it accurately, was in no mood to countenance new guarantees or even clarification of existing obligations under the League Covenant, while the United States declined even to consult with other powers in time of crisis. Nor was the British Prime Minister in a position to reconcile Franco-Italian differences. Failure of the conference at that moment, according to many observers, would have seriously endangered the European political situation. It was pointed out that a three-power agreement isolating France and Italy would not only block future efforts to achieve disarmament, but would make cooperation among the European powers difficult at Geneva. Moreover, there was some question of whether a three-power pact could be signed by Great Britain, while France and Italy remained isolated. Correspondents reporting the conference agreed that a crisis had been reached, and that only the injection of some new element could keep it alive.

#### MR. STIMSON'S MIDNIGHT STATEMENT

Just what led up to the re-statement of the American position on the consultative pact has not been revealed. At midnight on March 25, however, following a report published by the London *Daily Herald*, Mr. Stimson made public a statement clarifying the American position. The delegation, Mr. Stimson averred, had not changed its attitude since reaching the decision announced at the tea on March 11.

"At that time," the statement said, "it was made clear that America had no objection to entering a consultative pact as such; on the contrary, the United States is already a party to a number of treaties involving the obligation of consulting with other powers. It will not, however, enter into any treaty, whether consultative or otherwise, where there is danger of its obliga-

<sup>18</sup>. For text of statement, cf. *New York Times*, March 14, 1930.

<sup>19</sup>. *The Times* (London), March 17, 1930.



tion being misunderstood as involving a promise to render military assistance or guaranteeing protection by military force to another nation. Such a misunderstanding might arise if the United States entered into such a treaty as a *quid pro quo* for the reduction of the naval forces of another power. That danger has hitherto inhered in the present situation where France has been demanding mutual military security as a condition of naval reduction, as appears from her original statement of her case last December. If, however, this demand for security could be satisfied in some other way, then the danger of a misunderstanding of a consultative pact would be eliminated and in such case the question would be approached from an entirely different standpoint. In such case the American Delegation would consider the matter with an entirely open mind."<sup>20</sup>

The final sentences of this statement were taken to mean that, whatever the attitude of the United States had been two weeks earlier, the American delegation was now prepared to consider a consultative pact provided Great Britain was willing to give France the security it required. Some confusion resulted from reports emanating from Washington on the same day, however. These reports stated that the administration appeared to be opposed to a consultative pact in any form, and to be annoyed by the proposals for a pact which had come not from the governments at London but from outside sources. Later explanations made it clear that President Hoover had given the delegation a free hand at London and would not interfere in any way.

The effect of the American statement in London was at once apparent. On March 27 M. Briand returned to London from Paris and began immediate conversations with Mr. MacDonald and Mr. Henderson, the British Foreign Minister, looking toward a solution of the political issue. In entering this discussion, the British delegation made it clear that it would not increase Great Britain's military commitments and would not consider a security treaty on the model of the Locarno pact. But if the French delegation would be satisfied with the clarification of the obligations Great Britain had already assumed under the Covenant of the League and under the Locarno agreements, then the British delegation would be prepared to

make a thorough search for a formula which would increase the French sense of security. M. Briand informed Mr. MacDonald that France had no intention of asking Great Britain for additional commitments or further guarantees. France would be quite satisfied with a formula which would re-interpret and clarify the obligations of States under Article XVI of the League Covenant.<sup>21</sup>

#### THE SEARCH FOR A SECURITY FORMULA

The conversations thus begun on March 27 continued until April 8. During this period no less than 22 different formulas were said to have been considered by Mr. MacDonald and M. Briand, and by experts of the two Foreign Offices. Draft proposals were submitted by M. Briand to M. Tardieu, who had remained in Paris, and were returned with suggested amendments. These drafts all centred about the interpretation of Article XVI of the Covenant and about the question of whether a unanimous recommendation of the League Council was mandatory or binding on members. France held that Article XVI was useless if States were free to do as they chose after the Council had unanimously recommended collective action against an aggressor. In urging the British to accept this interpretation, M. Briand pointed out that as Great Britain was a member of the Council the British delegate could always prevent unanimity by opposing a recommendation. Therefore, he argued, the British government would not be increasing its obligations in any way if it promised to carry out a unanimous request.

The formula which was finally agreed upon by the two governments has not been published, and its precise terms cannot therefore be set forth here. On April 5, however, M. Briand went to Paris to review the whole situation confronting the conference. On his return on April 8 he brought with him the approval of the French Cabinet to a formula reported to embody the principle that unanimous recommendations of the League Council are regarded as obligatory by the British government. In return for

20. U. S. A., Department of State, *London Naval Conference, Speeches and Press Statements by Members of the American Delegation*, State Department Publication No. 67 (Washington, Government Printing Office), 1930, p. 35.

21. In the House of Commons on April 1 Prime Minister MacDonald declared, in answer to a question, that "the French Government do not ask, and have never asked, that the Government should add to the burdens which already devolve upon them as the result of those instruments [the League Covenant and the Locarno treaties]." *The Times* (London), April 2, 1930.

this formula the French government was reported to be ready to reduce its naval program from 713,000 tons to about 600,000 tons provided Italian claims were withdrawn. The French delegation was also understood to favor further reduction by the other powers as a result of this new formula of "security."

Immediately on his return to London, M. Briand conferred with Prime Minister MacDonald and informed him that while the French Cabinet had agreed to the security formula, it saw no prospect of an immediate solution of the Franco-Italian differences. In view of the fact that the other three powers had already reached a limitation agreement, M. Briand was represented as favoring a three-power limitation treaty within a larger five-power pact. In suggesting this solution, M. Briand rejected the idea of a four-power pact which would exclude Italy. A four-power treaty, it was pointed out, would be likely to intensify rather than diminish the dangers inherent in the Franco-Italian situation.

The final decision was taken on April 10, when Prime Minister MacDonald announced in the House of Commons that a three-power agreement had been reached, and that at a meeting between the French, Italian and British delegations:

"... it was decided that as such a substantial agreement had been reached, it was unnecessary and undesirable to keep the full body of delegates sitting at London pending the settlement of difficulties which primarily concern these three delegations only. So we shall propose at a plenary session early next week that the agreement now reached shall be signed and the conference adjourned on the understanding that France, Italy and ourselves shall continue efforts to come to an agreement in unison with that which has been reached by the United States, Japan and ourselves."<sup>22</sup>

In this manner the door was left open for France and Italy to join the limitation agreement with the other powers at some later date if the effort to adjust their mutual differences proved successful. The British government offered to use its good offices in assisting the two Continental powers to reach an accord, and the hope was expressed

by spokesmen for all three countries that an early adjustment would be made. Thus, for the moment at any rate, it was agreed that a dangerous situation had been avoided.

#### FRANCO-ITALIAN RELATIONS

Opinion differs on the question of whether a solution of the Franco-Italian controversy is likely to be found in the near future. Observers of the London conference are agreed that the negotiations revealed an intensity of feeling between France and Italy which had not been fully appreciated outside of Continental Europe.<sup>23</sup> Shortly after the conference had adjourned, a Fascist newspaper, *Il Popolo d'Italia*, stated that "while working for peace the basis for a new war had been laid down."<sup>24</sup> On May 11 Mussolini declared before a gathering of 55,000 Fascisti at Leghorn that "there is something inescapable, inevitable, in the march toward destiny of Fascist Italy. . . . Nobody can halt it." He intimated that the future of Italy lay on the sea.<sup>25</sup> Again, in a speech in Florence on May 17, Mussolini is reported to have "shouted a warning . . . that he intended to build ship for ship, ton for ton, as many warships as France built."<sup>25a</sup> In France, the announcement of the Italian naval program of 1930 was bitterly attacked in the press. In a leading editorial in *Le Temps* (Paris), the opinion was expressed that "Italy is deliberately taking the initiative in a policy of increasing naval armaments, although the London conference was intended to create a wide movement in favor of reduction."<sup>26</sup>

Meanwhile the continued negotiations promised in the closing days of the London conference have begun. On May 13 Foreign Ministers Briand and Grandi, attending the meeting of the League Council at Geneva, met at the invitation of Mr. Henderson, the British Foreign Secretary, and reviewed the issues outstanding between their two countries. These conversations may be expected to continue in the future.

23. For a review of political relations between France and Italy, cf. "France and Italy in the Mediterranean," F. P. A. Information Service, Vol. V, No. 26.

24. Quoted in *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, April 25, 1930.

25. *New York Times*, May 14, 1930.

25a. *Ibid.*, May 18, 1930.

26. Cf. *Le Temps* (Paris), May 3, 1930.

22. *New York Times*, April 11, 1930.

## PART II

### TERMS OF THE TREATY

The main provisions of the London Naval Treaty are as follows:

1. An extension of the capital ship "holiday," under which the five powers agree not to lay down battleships authorized for replacement under the Washington treaty before 1936. Three powers, the United States, Great Britain and Japan, agree to scrap or otherwise dispose of a total of 9 battleships within 30 months.

2. A re-definition of aircraft carriers to include ships under 10,000 tons.

3. A limitation agreement, under which the same three powers establish tonnage levels for cruisers, destroyers and submarines beyond which they agree not to build before December 31, 1936.

4. A safeguarding agreement, under which each of the three powers is given the right to exceed the tonnage levels established for cruisers, destroyers and submarines if in its opinion new construction by other powers affects the requirements of its national security.

5. A humanitarian agreement, under which the five powers apply to submarines the same rules of international law which govern the action of surface vessels in relation to merchant ships.

6. A series of regulatory agreements under which the five powers establish rules for replacement, scrapping and conversion of war vessels, and definitions of what constitute special and exempt vessels, etc.

#### THE BATTLESHIP HOLIDAY

Under the Washington treaty, replacement of battleships reaching the age limit of 20 years was to have begun in 1931. Between 1931 and 1936 the three principal powers were authorized to lay keels of 26 capital ships, of which 13 were to have been completed by the latter year. Meanwhile 22 old ships were to have been dropped from the fleets. The relative strength of the three principal battleship fleets in 1936 would then have been:

	Number	Tons
Great Britain .....	15	565,350
United States .....	15	490,900
Japan .....	9	288,080

The cost to these three powers of carrying out the Washington replacement program up to 1936 would have reached \$725,000,000.<sup>1</sup> The cost to the United States has been estimated by Congressman Burton L. French, chairman of the House sub-Committee on Naval Appropriations, at approximately \$281,250,000.<sup>2</sup>

The London treaty (Article I) stipulates that there shall be no new battleship construction before 1936. In other words, the five powers agree to suspend the Washington replacement program and to make no provision for future capital-ship building at the present time.

France and Italy, however, are allowed to "build the replacement tonnage [70,000 tons each] which they were entitled to lay down in 1927 and 1929" under the Washington treaty, but which they have not used up to the present time.

In addition to postponing replacement, Great Britain, the United States and Japan agree (Article 2) to dispose of 9 battleships in various ways within 30 months from the coming into force of the treaty.

Great Britain is to scrap four ships—the *Benbow*, *Marlborough*, *Emperor of India* and *Tiger*—two within 24 and two within 30 months. A fifth capital ship, the *Iron Duke*, may be retained for training purposes, but is to be rendered unfit for combat service.

The United States is to scrap two battleships, the *Florida* and *Utah*, one within 24 and one within 30 months. Either the *Arkansas* or *Wyoming* may be retained for training purposes.

Japan is to dispose of one ship, the *Hiyei*, which may be retained as a training vessel.

Thus, by 1936, the three battle fleets will be constituted as follows:

	Number	Tons
Great Britain .....	15	474,750
United States .....	15	462,400
Japan .....	9	266,070

1. Estimated on the basis of \$37,500,000 for each ship completed.

2. U. S. A., *Congressional Record*, May 9, 1930, Vol. 72, No. 119, p. 9010.

### PROPOSED ABOLITION OF BATTLESHIPS

Before the London conference met there were rumors current that either the United States or Great Britain would advocate the total abolition of battleships. These reports were given some substance a few days before the opening plenary session, when Prime Minister MacDonald in an interview with the press declared that the British government favored the "eventual abolition" of the capital ship.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Stimson, head of the American delegation, then on the *George Washington* on his way to London, informed the American press correspondents that the United States still regarded the battleship as "the core of the fleet," and indicated that total abolition would not be favored by the American delegation at the conference.

No further reference to the capital ship was made officially until February 6, when Mr. Stimson issued the summary of a memorandum outlining the American position as a whole, and proposing with respect to battleships "a reduction in numbers on both sides [British and American] to equalize our two fleets in 1936 instead of 1942."<sup>4</sup> No reference was made to replacements called for under the Washington treaty.

On February 7, the day following Mr. Stimson's statement, the British government issued a memorandum setting forth its position. In regard to battleships, the memorandum stated that the government "would wish to see an agreement by which battleships will in due time disappear altogether as it considers them a very doubtful proposition in view of their size and cost and of the development . . . of air and submarine attack." Specifically it proposed:

- No replacement before 1935;
- Reduction in numbers, to a level not specified;
- Reduction in size from 35,000 tons to 25,000 tons and of gun calibre from 16 to 12 inches;
- Extension of the age limit from 20 to 26 years.

Whether the British delegation pressed its proposal for an agreement looking toward eventual abolition of capital ships of 35,000 tons was not revealed during the course of the conference. On February 8, however, the day following the publication of the Brit-

ish memorandum, it became known that the American delegation, in the proposals made to the British, had requested the right to build a new super-battleship in order to insure precise parity at the levels suggested: 15 ships for the United States and Great Britain, 9 for Japan. The demand for a new 35,000-ton ship, confirmed by the American delegation on February 10, was based on the claim that retention of the *Rodney* and *Nelson*, built in 1927 under the Washington treaty, gave the British fleet superiority over the American fleet. The proposal was severely criticized in the American press as being out of harmony with the announced policy of reduction, and was dropped by the delegation without further explanation.<sup>5</sup>

France stated that it would be willing to accept a battleship holiday (up to a total of 105,000 tons) providing France were permitted to build the unused replacement tonnage permitted by the Washington treaty. The only other official suggestion with regard to battleships was advanced by Italy in a memorandum issued February 19,<sup>6</sup> in which the Italian delegation announced its willingness "to examine favorably the abolition of capital ships," should the other powers concur. The proposal was not taken up by the other powers, however, and subsequent discussion of battleship levels was conducted in private conversations between the delegations. Records of these conversations have not been made public, and it is therefore impossible to indicate what other proposals, if any, were advanced. From unofficial sources it was understood that reduction to a level of 10 or 12 ships for the United States and Great Britain and 6 or 7 for Japan was discussed by more than one delegation. No formal proposal was made by

5. Mr. Stimson later revealed in testimony submitted to the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate that the super-battleship was proposed as a "bargaining point." In the course of the testimony, he stated that this demand had been abandoned in return for formal acknowledgment by Great Britain of the United States' right to increase the elevation of the main armament of their battleships. In a letter of April 17, 1930 the British Foreign Secretary, Mr. Arthur Henderson, stated that the British government was "happy to place on record that they have no objection to such modernisation of United States capital ships." (Cf. *New York Herald-Tribune*, May 25, 1930.)

When increased elevation had first been proposed, in 1923, Great Britain had protested that it would be a violation of the Washington treaty. This the Navy Department denied, but the matter was allowed to drop until 1927 when funds were appropriated for the carrying out of the required alterations in two U. S. battleships; on this occasion the British government made no comment. (Cf. "International Naval Situation," *F. P. A. Information Service*, Vol. III, No. 21-22, p. 314.)

6. For text, cf. *New York Times*, February 20, 1930.

3. *New York Times*, January 16, 1930.

4. *London Naval Conference, Speeches*, cited, p. 20.



any delegation, however, despite the fact that the British were reported favorable to such reduction.

The final agreement revealed that the British proposals for extending the age limit of battleships to 26 years were not adopted.<sup>6a</sup> With the age limit left, therefore, at 20 years, as in the Washington treaty, 11 British battleships, 7 American and 5 Japanese battleships will be technically obsolete by the end of 1936. The entire French and Italian battleship fleets will be obsolete. The whole question of the future of the battleship—its size and gun power—has been left over for final determination at the next conference, to be called in 1935 unless a general disarmament treaty dealing also with naval armaments is concluded under the auspices of the League of Nations before that time.

#### LIMITATION OF AIRCRAFT CARRIERS

The provisions of the Washington treaty governing the tonnage levels of aircraft carriers were not modified by the London treaty. These levels were 135,000 tons each for the United States and Britain, 81,000 tons for Japan and 60,000 tons each for France and Italy. Since the Washington conference no power has built up to its allotted level. Today Britain has 6 aircraft carriers totaling 115,350 tons. The United States has three carriers (76,286 tons) built, and one of 13,800 tons appropriated for—a total of 90,086 tons. Japan has four ships (68,870 tons) in this class, France one ship of 22,000 tons and Italy none.

The British government, in its memorandum of February 7, formally proposed reduction of aircraft carriers to 100,000 tons for the British Empire and the United States, "and an adjustment of [the tonnage] assigned to other nations in the Washington treaty ratios. It further proposes that the maximum size of aircraft carriers

should be reduced to 25,000 tons and that their age should be 26 years instead of 20."<sup>7</sup> Finally, the British government proposed that ships of 10,000 tons and under, if used as aircraft carriers, should be included in the total tonnage of this category.<sup>8</sup>

The American delegation resisted these proposals, with the exception of the last mentioned, and refused to consider reduction from 135,000 tons to 100,000 tons. Spokesmen for the American delegation declared that within the lower tonnage the American aircraft carriers would not be the equal of the British for the reason that a disproportionate percentage of the American tonnage is used by two large ships, the *Lexington* and *Saratoga*, of 33,000 tons each, whereas the British, with smaller ships, are able to maintain a greater number of landing platforms. Opposition to reduction on the part of the United States was criticized by some American newspapers, which recalled President Hoover's pledge to "go as low as any other power."<sup>9</sup>

The Japanese delegation made no public declaration of its position on the British proposal for further reduction in aircraft carriers, but was understood to favor retention of the Washington levels. The Japanese made a formal declaration in favor of extending the age limit of carriers over 10,000 tons to 26 years, and of including ships under 10,000 tons in the aircraft carrier category.

In the final treaty signed at London the age limit of aircraft carriers fixed by the Washington treaty was not extended, nor was the maximum size reduced. The definition of an aircraft carrier was amended to include ships under 10,000 tons used for this purpose. Carriers under 10,000 tons are not to be armed with guns of a calibre larger than 6.1 inches. With these amendments, the provisions of the Washington treaty relating to aircraft carriers remain in force.

6a. For fuller discussion of replacement provisions, cf. p. 119.

7. Great Britain, Foreign Office, *Memorandum on the Position at the London Naval Conference of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom 1930* (Cmd. 3485), London, H. M. Stationery Office, 1930.

8. The Washington treaty defined an aircraft carrier as a vessel of over 10,000 tons. By inference, vessels under this tonnage capable of landing airplanes were not subject to limitation.

9. Cf. p. 121.

### LIMITATION OF CRUISERS, DESTROYERS AND SUBMARINES

Where the Washington and Geneva conferences failed to limit auxiliary vessels, the London conference succeeded in drafting a three-power agreement for these categories.

Part III of the London treaty, signed by the United States, Great Britain and Japan,

establishes maximum tonnage levels, which may be reached but not exceeded by December 31, 1936, in the categories of cruisers, destroyers and submarines. The levels established in Article 16 are shown in the following table:

<i>Categories</i>	<i>United States</i>	<i>United Kingdom</i> ( <i>In tons</i> )	<i>Japan</i>
Cruisers			
(a) With guns of more than 6.1 inch calibre ....	180,000	146,800	108,400
(b) With guns of 6.1 inch calibre or less .....	143,500	192,200	100,450
Destroyers .....	150,000	150,000	105,500
Submarines .....	52,700	52,700	52,700
Totals .....	526,200	541,700	367,050

In the preceding article the treaty had already established two sub-categories of cruisers: (a) those with guns above 6.1-inch calibre,<sup>10</sup> and (b) those with guns of 6.1-inch calibre and less. The tonnage displacement of 6-inch-gun ships was not limited, thus permitting any power to build vessels up to the maximum of 10,000 tons each.

Under the terms of Article 16 the United States may have 18 8-inch-gun cruisers and 143,500 tons of 6-inch-gun cruisers—a total of 323,500 tons. Great Britain may have 15 8-inch-gun ships<sup>11</sup> and 192,200 tons of 6-inch-gun ships—a total of 339,000 tons. Japan is given 12 8-inch-gun ships<sup>12</sup> and 100,450 tons in 6-inch-gun cruisers—a total of 208,850 tons.

For the United States these provisions are modified by Article 18:

First, the United States is given the option of building 15, instead of 18 8-inch-gun cruisers, and substituting for the other three ships 45,500 tons of 6-inch-gun cruisers. Should this option be exercised, the United States would have a total cruiser tonnage of 339,000—or the exact equivalent of the tonnage granted to Great Britain. Great Britain is not given a similar option of building 18, instead of 15 8-inch-gun cruisers and reducing its total cruiser tonnage to 323,500. The arrangement gives the United States alone the right to choose between a cruiser fleet exactly equal to that of Great Britain in total tonnage, or a cruiser fleet superior to that of the British in 8-inch-

gun ships but inferior in 6-inch-gun vessels and in total tonnage.<sup>13</sup>

Secondly, should the United States proceed with the building of 18 8-inch-gun ships, it engages not to complete the last three before 1936. This engagement relates to the Japanese demand for the equivalent of 70 per cent of the American tonnage in large cruisers. The tonnage granted Japan (108,400 tons) is only 60 per cent of that given the United States (180,000 tons). As a compromise proposal the United States has promised not to complete the last three cruisers before 1936, thus giving Japan the equivalent of more than 70 per cent of the American strength for the period of the treaty.<sup>14</sup>

It will be recalled that the Rapidan agreement was conditional and could be made final only if the programs of the other naval powers could be harmonized with it. For Great Britain the total of 339,000 tons of cruisers was a minimum requirement which depended on the tonnage levels maintained by France, Italy and Japan. The problem before the London conference, therefore, was to adjust the Anglo-American difference over three 8-inch-gun cruisers, and to secure an agreement with the other powers which would not upset the Rapidan figures. This problem was complicated by

13. It may be pointed out that in any case the American fleet would not necessarily duplicate the British fleet, although the tonnage levels in 8-inch and 6-inch-gun classes would be approximately the same. Great Britain, in order to reach a total of 50 ships, will be required to limit the size of 6-inch-gun cruisers to approximately 5,500 tons each. The United States, on the other hand, will be free under either option to build 6-inch-gun cruisers up to 10,000 tons each.

14. If the United States decides to build 18 8-inch-gun ships, they will be laid down and completed as follows: one laid down in 1933, completed in 1936; one laid down in 1934, completed in 1937; one laid down in 1935, completed in 1938.

10. These will be 8-inch-gun ships.

11. These include 2 ships of 8,400 tons.

12. These include 4 ships of 7,100 tons each.

the size of the French building program, and by the demand of Japan for 70 per cent of the large-cruiser tonnage accorded the United States (instead of the 60 per cent Washington ratio in capital ships).

Finally, the London treaty disposes of the difficulty hitherto created by the four British cruisers of the *Hawkins* class—ships carrying 7.5-inch guns and having a displacement of 9,800 tons. At the Geneva conference these ships complicated the cruiser settlement because they were not 8-inch-gun ships, although they are more powerful than 6-inch-gun vessels. The London treaty makes no provision for their replacement; in the future the British navy is to have not more than 15 large cruisers and 35 smaller ones. Presumably the *Vindictive* and the *Hawkins* will be disposed of upon reaching the age limit in 1934 and 1935 respectively; the treaty specifically provides for the scrapping of the *Effingham* and the *Frobisher* in the year 1936.<sup>14a</sup>

#### HOW THE CRUISER AGREEMENT WAS REACHED

The foundation for a three-power cruiser agreement was laid during the early stages of the conference. During the absence of the French delegation informal discussions between the British, American and Japanese delegations had been proceeding. On February 7 Mr. Stimson proposed that the outstanding difference between the United States and Great Britain be settled as follows:

"Under our suggestion the actual tonnage difference between the two cruiser fleets will be only 12,000 tons. Of the larger cruisers armed with 8-inch guns Great Britain will have 15 and the United States 18, an advantage to the latter of 30,000 tons.

"Of the smaller cruisers armed with 6-inch guns Great Britain will have an advantage of 42,000 tons. But beyond this, in order to insure exact equality of opportunity, the United States makes the suggestion that each country will have the option of duplicating exactly the cruiser fleet of the other. . . ."<sup>15</sup>

In other words, the American delegation offered to reduce its demand for large cruisers from 21 to 18, with the option of duplicating exactly the British figures. This change was not unconditional. First, as Mr.

Stimson pointed out, the United States was asking for an increase of 12,000 tons in small cruisers over the figures discussed at Rapidan. The American total was to have been 315,000 tons if the United States had been granted 21 large cruisers. With 18 large cruisers the United States would ask 327,000 tons. Secondly, it developed in meetings of the Experts' Committee that the United States was asking the right to build 6-inch-gun cruisers up to the maximum size permitted—namely, 10,000 tons. This would limit the number which the United States could build, but would give the ships the wide cruising radius held to be essential.

The British delegation made no public reply to the American offer. In the memorandum issued February 7, however, the government declared that it favored a limit of 6,000 or 7,000 tons each in the case of 6-inch-gun ships. When the matter came before the Experts' Committee, the British delegates pressed this point again. They argued that in order to retain a minimum of 50 ships within the tonnage allowed (339,000 tons) the British 6-inch-gun ships could not be much over 5,000 tons. These small vessels would be greatly inferior to the ships other countries might build. The Japanese delegation at first supported the British, preferring a limit of about 7,000 tons for 6-inch-gun cruisers; but in the end both delegations abandoned their opposition and agreed to leave the size of these ships unlimited. The treaty therefore gives the United States the right to build "small" cruisers up to 10,000 tons if it so desires.

No serious objection was raised by Great Britain to the other points in the American proposals. The British delegation apparently did not care to write in the option to duplicate the American large-cruiser figures, but left the United States free to match the British tonnage if it desired. The final figures give the United States a total of 323,500 tons instead of the 327,000 tons proposed by Mr. Stimson.

#### THE SETTLEMENT WITH JAPAN

The settlement with Japan proved more difficult. Before the conference met Japan had made it clear that it would ask for a ratio of 70 per cent in cruisers and destroyers. Japan was willing to accept a lower propor-

<sup>14a</sup>. London Naval Treaty of 1930, Article 20.

<sup>15</sup>. London Naval Conference, Speeches, etc., cited, p. 18.

tion in destroyers and small cruisers, but would not accept a lower ratio with respect to the United States in the vital category of 8-inch-gun ships. A Japanese fleet having 70 per cent of the American strength could not possibly be used for aggressive purposes, according to the Japanese thesis, but would insure adequate strength for national defense.

Throughout the negotiations at London, the Japanese made no detailed public statement of their position other than a brief memorandum issued on February 13. This memorandum merely stated that Japan attached special importance to 8-inch-gun cruisers, and favored limitation of small-gun cruisers to 7,000 or 7,500 tons. Moreover, the Japanese already had 108,400 tons of 8-inch-gun ships, which was more than the United States possessed.

The final Japanese agreement was the result of a series of private conversations between Senator Reed and Ambassador Matsudaira, which continued for several weeks, and conversations between the heads of the American, Japanese and British delegations. Various proposals were discussed. The United States was not willing to accord the full 70 per cent asked by Japan for large cruisers; Japan insisted upon this figure in the 8-inch-gun class. If the United States was to have 180,000 tons, Japan would require 126,000 tons. This demand involved adding two new 10,000-ton cruisers to the Japanese fleet, as Japan already had eight cruisers of this size, and four more 8-inch-gun ships of 7,100 tons each. The only solution discovered was the compromise embodied in the three-power agreement, under which Japan dropped its demand for the two extra ships and accepted 60 per cent of the American tonnage in large cruisers on the understanding that the United States would not complete more than 15 ships in this class before 1936. For the period of the treaty, therefore, Japan is assured a 70 per cent ratio in big-gun cruisers. In small-gun cruisers and destroyers the levels established gave Japan 70 per cent of the American tonnage.<sup>15a</sup> In submarines it is to enjoy parity with the United States.

The tonnage levels discussed by the American and Japanese delegations offered no opportunity for reduction, owing to the fact

that the American levels were conditioned by the British figures, which in turn represented an "irreducible minimum."

The essential terms of the three-power agreement had been settled to the satisfaction of the three delegations by March 14. Meanwhile, the French delegation had returned to London and the conference was brought face to face with the problem of preserving what had already been accomplished, and of bringing France and Italy into the agreement. But Great Britain would not promise to hold to its bargain with the United States and Japan unless the French figures were reduced. It was even reported on what seemed to be reliable authority that the British would ask for an additional 35,000 tons of cruisers and 50,000 tons of destroyers if the French program was recognized and written into the treaty. This figure represented the requirements of the British Admiralty; but it was unacceptable to the American delegation, which could not bring back a treaty requiring much further building than that authorized under the American naval program.

The key to this problem was political. As already shown, no attempt to introduce political subjects was made until the final weeks of the conference. Here it need only be added that France did not publicly state what reductions it would make in return for the promised security formula. Before figures were produced it had become apparent that the Franco-Italian differences could not be solved and under the circumstances the conference recognized the futility of further effort to achieve a full five-power limitation agreement. The three-power agreement was therefore allowed to stand, subject to the qualifying clause contained in Article 21.<sup>16</sup>

#### DESTROYERS AND SUBMARINES

The maximum levels established for destroyers and submarines are below those proposed at Geneva in 1927, and below the tonnage actually maintained by the three powers today. The strength of the three navies in these categories on March 1, 1930, including ships built and building, compared with the treaty tonnage, is shown in the following table:

<sup>15a</sup>. For figures, cf. p. 126.

<sup>16</sup>. Cf. p. 120-23.



	Destroyers		Submarines	
	<i>Present Strength</i>	<i>London Treaty</i>	<i>Present Strength</i>	<i>London Treaty</i>
	(In tons)		(In tons)	
United States .....	290,304	150,000	81,000	52,700
Great Britain .....	184,371	150,000	60,284	52,700
Japan .....	122,500	105,450	78,497	52,700
Total .....	597,175	405,450	219,781	158,100

The three powers found little difficulty in arriving at an agreement on destroyer tonnage levels in London. The British government, in its memorandum of February 7, first suggested a figure of 200,000 tons for the United States and the British Empire. This level, which would have represented an increase in the British tonnage, was advanced by Great Britain because of the high submarine tonnage contemplated by France and other powers. The memorandum stated that this could be reduced "if the submarine programs of other powers are reduced, for it is obvious that the size and total tonnage of destroyers must largely depend upon the size and total tonnage of submarines." When it came to signing the three-power limitation provisions, however, the British government agreed with the United States on 150,000 tons. During recent years neither the United States nor Great Britain has actually maintained in commission a destroyer tonnage in excess of 150,000 tons. The United States, although possessing 290,000 tons of destroyers, has kept only about 100,000 tons in commission. The treaty level, therefore, practically provides for at least the full limit of tonnage which any of the three powers are prepared to keep in service.

#### PROPOSALS FOR ABOLITION OF SUBMARINES

Ever since the Washington conference, Great Britain has favored the total abolition of submarines. In 1921 the United States did not favor abolition, and France refused to consider any reduction in submarine tonnage. Since the Washington conference the United States has altered its position, and at London came out in favor of abolishing under-sea craft provided all nations agreed to the proposal.

When the London conference convened it was well known that neither France nor Japan would agree to the total abolition of submarines. Ever since the Washington conference France has been engaged in an extensive submarine building program designed to bring its fleet up to 99,000 tons by 1936. It was known that Japan, likewise, counted heavily on submarines as relatively cheap "defensive" weapons. Nevertheless, for purposes of the record, the conference decided to hold a plenary session given over to an expression of the views of the powers on this subject. The plenary session was held at St. James's Palace on February 11. Great Britain and the United States proposed total abolition. France and Japan favored retention of submarines, with an agreement to restrict their use against merchant vessels in time of war. Italy did not object to the principle of abolition provided all the powers concurred, but as a practical measure favored drastic reduction and an agreement regulating the use of submarines.

The British arguments in favor of total abolition, put forward by Mr. A. V. Alexander, First Lord of the Admiralty, were based on the following considerations:

1. The general interests of humanity;
2. The view that submarines are primarily instruments of aggressive warfare;
3. The desire to secure a substantial contribution to disarmament and peace;
4. The important financial relief to be obtained by this means;
5. The conditions of service of the personnel and the avoidance of undue risks.

The United States favored abolition:

1. For the purpose of suppressing costly weapons;
2. "For the purpose of eliminating for the future the dreadful experiences of the past."<sup>18</sup>

18. *London Naval Conference, Speeches, etc.*, cited, p. 22.

The French delegate, M. Leygues, entered a strong defense of the submarine, claiming that it is essentially no different from any other warship, that it is a defensive weapon, and that its use can be regulated like that of surface vessels. The French delegation proposed a resolution applying to submarines the same rules as those covering the action of surface vessels against merchant ships.

Japan, likewise, favored restricting the use of the submarine, but defended its retention as an important and essential defensive weapon.

#### **"HUMANIZING" SUBMARINE WARFARE**

While the abolition of submarines proved impossible at London, therefore, an agreement restricting their use against merchant ships was incorporated in the treaty. This agreement (Article 22) is not to terminate in 1936, but is to remain in force indefinitely. The parties (including all five powers) agree to extend to submarines the recognized rules of international law which govern the action of surface vessels with respect to merchant ships. In particular, no submarine may sink or incapacitate a merchant vessel without first having placed passengers, crew and ship's papers in a place of safety. Lifeboats are not regarded as a "place of safety" unless the presence of another vessel, the nearness of land or the calmness of the sea warrants such a conclusion. If a merchant vessel persistently refuses to stop on being summoned, or resists visit or search, these rules are not binding.

This article is less drastic than the corresponding provision of the treaty signed at Washington by the same five powers in 1922. The Washington treaty not only extended to submarines the recognized rules governing surface vessels, but prohibited in effect the use of submarines as commerce destroyers and declared that submarine commanders who violated the rules were liable to trial and punishment for acts of piracy. But the Washington treaty did not secure unanimous ratification and consequently failed to become operative.<sup>19</sup>

Opinion differs as to whether the London agreement marks an advance in this respect.

Critics of "humanizing" measures argue that a power which resorts to war in violation of its pledge under the Kellogg pact or under the League Covenant can hardly be expected to observe scrupulously the "gentlemanly" rules set up in time of peace. When national existence is at stake, these critics assert, no nation will be guided by the rules of international law if the latter are not to its advantage. On the other hand, supporters of the agreement regulating the use of the submarine see in Article 22 of the London treaty a further step toward eventual abolition. They argue that any country which flagrantly violates the rules of submarine warfare will inevitably arouse the moral indignation and political opposition of the entire world. They recall that even when there were no rules for submarine warfare, Germany forced the United States and practically every other great power in the world to declare war against it by unrestricted and "inhuman" use of submarines. In the future the political drawbacks of violating the rules regulating submarine warfare would far outweigh the purely naval and strategic advantages.

Moreover, the importance of submarines as a weapon for use against battleships and other surface vessels has been greatly reduced in recent years by modern devices for defense against submarine attack and for detecting submarines at great distances. The naval experts of all the powers at London recognized the significance of these new devices. Indeed, French naval experts went so far as to say privately that they now placed a lower estimate on the value of submarines for naval use and the prediction was made that France would shortly curtail its submarine building program. The French public, however, has been convinced by naval propaganda over a period of years that the submarine is an essential weapon, and it will probably require some time to persuade it to the contrary.

An effort was made to limit the size of submarines to 2,000 tons, and an agreement to this effect was incorporated in the treaty (Article 7). However, the fact that Great Britain, France and the United States each have one or more larger submarines built or building made it necessary to incorporate a general exception to this limitation. Each

<sup>19</sup> France was the only power to withhold ratification.

of the five powers, therefore, was permitted to retain, build or acquire a maximum number of three submarines not exceeding 2,800 tons each.<sup>19a</sup> The five powers further agreed not to build submarines of over 2,000 tons for any other country.

#### REPLACEMENT PROVISIONS

The useful life of war vessels is exceedingly short. Whereas a merchant ship may last for 40 years or more, and still render efficient service, warships over 20 years of age have generally been regarded as unfit for service. To keep a navy at a certain level, therefore, constant building is necessary. New ships must be laid down, not to increase the size of the navy but merely to maintain a fixed strength. Replacement rules and replacement schedules are therefore an important part of every naval limitation treaty.

The Washington treaty fixed the life of capital ships and aircraft carriers at 20 years. At Geneva, in 1927, the British delegation proposed an extension in the life of all war vessels as a measure of economy: battleships from 20 to 26 years; cruisers from 20 to 24 years; destroyers from 16 to 20 years; and submarines from 13 to 15 years.<sup>20</sup> This extension was not favored by the United States and Japan, and as the Geneva conference failed to result in a treaty, no new replacement rules were adopted.

At London the British delegation again formally proposed the extension of the life of battleships and aircraft carriers in its memorandum of February 7, but it did not advocate prolonging the life of cruisers beyond 20 years. The American and Japanese delegations at London were opposed to age extension, although their reasons for taking this position were not publicly explained.

The London treaty (Annex I, Part II) shortened rather than extended the age limits generally accepted by the powers. The treaty makes a distinction between ships laid down before January 1, 1920 and ships laid down after that date as follows:

#### AGE LIMITS FOR AUXILIARY VESSELS

Categories	Laid Down Before	Laid Down After
	January 1, 1920	December 31, 1919
Cruisers	16 yrs.	20 yrs.
Destroyers	12 yrs.	16 yrs.
Submarines	13 yrs.	13 yrs.

The effect of these rules is to permit a great deal of replacement building which would not have been authorized under the rules proposed at Geneva or by the practice of the principal naval powers. The United States, for example, is entitled to replace the entire present destroyer tonnage established by the treaty owing to the fact that all but two of the 284 American destroyers were laid down prior to 1920. No less than 103 of these destroyers, however, were completed between 1920 and 1922, and will be only from 14 to 16 years old by 1936.

In the case of the United States, Great Britain and Japan the rules are modified by special provisions governing replacement of ships limited under Part III of the treaty. Thus, Great Britain is not to complete more than 91,000 tons of cruisers before the end of 1936, although according to the general replacement rules practically the entire British cruiser fleet (with the exception of 8-inch-gun ships) will become obsolete during the life of the treaty.

All these powers, however, are allowed to "anticipate" replacement by laying down during the life of the treaty keels for cruisers and submarines reaching the age limit in 1937, 1938, and 1939. Thus the United States may begin replacement in 1936 of two cruisers of the *Omaha* class, finished as recently as 1923, but which under the 16-year age limit will be "obsolete" in 1939. Japan is specially permitted to finish replacement of one cruiser, the *Tama*, in 1936, although it does not reach the age limit until 1937, and to "anticipate" replacement of 19,200 tons of submarines which would not normally reach replacement age until after the expiration of the treaty. The reason given by Japan for making this request was that Japanese building yards could not be kept up without a certain amount of construction work.

The extent of replacement building permitted by the treaty is analyzed in another part of this report.<sup>21</sup>

19a. France was permitted to complete one submarine, the *Surcouf*, which is designed to displace 2,880 tons.

20. *Records of the Conference for the Limitation of Naval Armament*, held at Geneva from June 20 to August 4, 1927, p. 22.

21. Cf. p. 112.

### THE "ESCAPE" CLAUSE

The political situation which necessitated incorporation of this clause has been mentioned above, and will be touched upon again. Inserted at the request of Great Britain, Article 21 provides that:

"If, during the term of the present Treaty, the requirements of the national security of any High Contracting Party . . . are in the opinion of that Party materially affected by new construction of any Power other than those who have joined in Part III of this Treaty, that High Contracting Party will notify the other Parties . . . as to the increase required to be made in its own tonnages. . . ."

In effect, this means that the limitation imposed on the United States, Great Britain and Japan by Part III of the treaty may be exceeded "on notice" of any one of these powers. The other powers are then free to make a proportionate increase in their own tonnage. The extent to which this impairs the value of other vital parts of the treaty is a matter of interpretation, and the different views expressed by competent observers will be touched on below. The final sentence of Article 21, however, suggests the possibility of consultation before new building is actually begun. It states: ". . . the other Parties [after being notified] shall promptly advise with each other through diplomatic channels as to the situation thus presented."

### MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

The miscellaneous provisions, to which all five powers subscribe, are too technical to be summarized in detail here. Some of these provisions are important, however, and their significance should not be overlooked. Thus, the five powers agree to exchange full information about ships laid down and completed during the life of the treaty (Article 10).<sup>22</sup>

Another agreement which was reached by the conference was not incorporated in the treaty. This was the compromise between the "global tonnage" and the "category" methods of limitation incorporated in a report drafted by the First Committee which will be sent to the League Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference at Geneva. The report has not yet been published, but its terms are known to include a compromise method of limitation. It proposes that navies should be divided into five categories—battleships, aircraft carriers, cruisers, destroyers and submarines. The category of cruisers is to be subdivided into ships with 8-inch guns and ships with 6-inch guns. In the case of smaller navies, 6-inch-gun cruisers and destroyers may be counted as one class. States are to agree not to exceed the total or "global" tonnage which they specify in a general treaty. Within this total tonnage, they are to agree further not to exceed the limitations set in the different categories. To meet special requirements, however, they may transfer a certain agreed percentage from one category to another, but such transfer may not include battleships or aircraft carriers. This agreement was not incorporated in the London treaty itself.

The London Naval Treaty, if ratified, will remain in force until December 31, 1936. The rules for humanization of submarine warfare will remain in force indefinitely, however, and the provisions governing aircraft carriers will remain in force "for the same period as the Washington Treaty."

Unless a general disarmament treaty which also includes limitation of naval armaments is concluded in the meantime, the powers agree to meet in 1935 to frame a new agreement to replace and carry out the purposes of the present treaty.

22. Other important provisions are:  
1. Rules for determining standard displacement. (Article 6).  
2. All vessels under 600 tons, and larger ships of low speed, inferior gun power, etc., exempt from limitation. (Article 8).  
3. Special vessels totaling 243,000 tons may be retained by the five powers and not counted in the

tonnage subject to limitation. (Article 9 and Annex 3). This list, which includes mine layers, gunboats, destroyer tenders, yachts, transports, etc., may be revised at any time by a supplementary agreement.  
4. Rules for disposal of war vessels by scrapping, conversion to hulks, etc., are laid down in the greatest detail.



### PART III

#### ESTIMATES OF THE TREATY

During the next few months every phase of the London Naval Treaty will be subjected to searching analysis by Parliaments and government councils on the one hand, and by a critical public on the other. Examination of the treaty has already begun in the United States. On May 1 President Hoover sent it to the Senate with a brief letter asking for ratification. Hearings before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee were called by Senator Borah on May 12, and supplementary hearings were scheduled by the Naval Affairs Committees of both House and Senate.

Members of the administration have cited five important accomplishments which make the treaty a "success," and justify favorable action by the Senate. These accomplishments are:

The ending of competition between the three greatest naval powers by the establishment of definite limitation in all categories of war vessels.

The promotion of good relations among the nations through the removal of suspicion and distrust.

The saving in cost which will result from the battleship holiday.

The reduction in tonnage achieved by limitation at lower levels in certain categories of auxiliary vessels.

The attainment of parity between the combat fleets of the United States and Great Britain.

Secretary Stimson, on his arrival in New York on April 29, stated:

"The American delegation went to London with the primary purpose of promoting good will between the nations of the earth. We believe that naval limitation is one of the most direct and potent steps toward achieving such good will. For just as naval competition between nations leads to rivalry, suspicion and ever increasing competition, so on the other hand naval limitation leads to mutual confidence, and confidence leads to further limitation in the future."<sup>23</sup>

On the same occasion Senator Robinson declared:

"Since the treaty limits all warships of the three chief powers, reduces tonnage in some categories, outlaws attacks on merchant ships by submarines, except in compliance with the rules ap-

plicable to surface craft, we feel justified in asking the favorable judgment of the Senate and the public on the results."<sup>24</sup>

A large section of public opinion—as expressed by important newspapers, organizations devoted to foreign affairs and peace groups—has received the results of the London conference with less show of enthusiasm. Critical observers have pointed out that the American public was led by official government spokesmen, including the President, to expect a full five-power limitation treaty and substantial reduction in tonnage as well as savings in cost as a result of the London conference. They recall that President Hoover in his Armistice Day address promised that the United States would reduce as much as any other power. "We will reduce our naval strength in proportion to any other," the President declared. "Having said that, it only remains for the others to say how far they will go. It cannot be too low for us."<sup>25</sup> This pledge, they hold, has not been kept. In support of this view they point out that the American delegation rejected the British proposals to reduce aircraft carriers and to extend the age limit of vessels, which would have permitted a substantial saving in replacement costs. They also declare that had the American delegation proposed a further reduction in battleships (which would undoubtedly have been accepted by the other powers), real reduction could have been achieved even though the Franco-Italian question proved impossible to settle. Because of the failure of the American delegation thus to achieve the highest degree of reduction possible, the results of the London conference are not what the American public was led to expect.

In the debate beginning in the Senate, discussion of the treaty has centered around three principal questions:

1. Does Article 21 of the treaty, the so-called "escape" clause, render useless or even dangerous the three-power limitation agreement?
2. Do the tonnage levels established by the treaty mean an increase or a decrease in present strength and in naval expenditure?
3. Does the treaty establish parity between the United States and Great Britain?

23. *New York Times*, April 30, 1930.

24. *Ibid.*, April 30, 1930.

25. *Ibid.*, November 12, 1929.

# THE EFFECT OF ARTICLE 21

Article 21 is important for the reason that it permits the tonnage levels established by the treaty to be exceeded on notice of one power. This means, it is claimed, that the dangers inherent in competitive building have not been removed. If Great Britain is alarmed by a Franco-Italian naval building race and notifies the United States and Japan that it desires to exceed the tonnage levels established in the treaty, these two parties to the agreement are likewise free to increase their fleets proportionately. It is pointed out that this would be likely to lead to serious misunderstanding, if not to a renewal of competition. Senator Swanson has already declared that provocative building by European powers would in effect nullify the treaty and make it difficult for the United States to retain parity with Great Britain. If as a result of submarine building by France, for example, Great Britain announced its intention of building more 6-inch-gun cruisers, the United States, according to Senator Swanson, would apparently be free to build an equal number of ships in this class, but not of the 8-inch-gun ships which it felt that it required. Such a situation, it is claimed, might lead to a revival of the naval differences which followed the Geneva conference in 1927.

Champions of the London treaty claim that Article 21 is of little practical importance because there is only a very remote chance that it will be invoked during the life of the treaty. The first claim made is that France will not actually carry out to its full limits the naval program of 1924 on which it based its demands at London. In support of this claim the fact is cited that since 1924 France has failed to appropriate the funds necessary to carry out the annual allotment on scheduled time. Moreover, during the final weeks of the conference M. Briand verbally assured Mr. MacDonald that the French program would not be "built up" by 1936. In the second place, it is claimed that Italy is in no financial position to begin a naval construction race with France during the life of the treaty. In recent years, the annual construction bill of Italy has been somewhat smaller than that of France. In these circumstances it is hardly possible

that Great Britain will regard as dangerous to its own national security any new building undertaken by the two Continental powers. Even admitting that the British Admiralty might wish to be relieved of the limitation imposed by the treaty should French and Italian construction approach alarming levels, the final decision must take political factors into account. If relations with the United States would be strained by a renewal of building, no British government would care to invoke Article 21, except as a last resort.

This view has been challenged by a number of critical observers who believe that in all probability the "escape" clause will be invoked within two or three years from the coming into force of the treaty. These critics contend that maintenance of the "two-power" standard by Great Britain will require the British government to invoke Article 21 whenever the combined tonnage of France and Italy exceeds that of Great Britain. The two-power standard was never officially mentioned as such during the course of the London Naval Conference. Nevertheless, the British delegation was required by the weight of Admiralty opinion to make acceptance of the so-called Rapidan figures conditional on a reduction in the French program.

Mr. Frank H. Simonds, one of those who contend that Great Britain will be forced to invoke Article 21, makes this point in a recent article:

"What was never set forth to the American public [during the MacDonald visit] was the double fact that the Admiralty figures were at once fixed and conditional. They were fixed in the sense that MacDonald was informed in advance of his Washington visit that the Admiralty would refuse to sanction any *lowering* of this estimate; he was notified that this estimate could only be maintained if it proved consistent with the preservation of the two-power standard, exclusive of the United States."<sup>26</sup>

At London, Mr. Simonds said, it became perfectly obvious that the Rapidan figures for cruisers and the British figures in other categories would have to be revised upward unless the French program could be reduced.

26. *The Sunday Star* (Washington, D. C.), May 4, 1930.

If the French program was not reduced, and was written into the treaty, the British Admiralty let it become known that an additional 50,000 tons of destroyers and 35,000 tons of cruisers would be required for the British Empire. Assuming, therefore, that the French program will be carried out on schedule time, it is clear, according to Mr. Simonds and others, that Article 21 will be invoked.

#### GREAT BRITAIN AND THE TWO-POWER STANDARD

The points at issue between the defenders and critics of Article 21 are, first, whether the unwritten two-power standard will actually be threatened, and second, if it is threatened, whether the British government will upset the limitation agreement.

The following facts are pertinent to the first question: The British fleet is limited to 1,151,450 tons under the London treaty. At the conference, the French delegation announced that the strength of the French fleet in 1936 would be 713,000 tons.<sup>27</sup> Italy declined to state its building program until France recognized the principle of parity; but Italy estimated its own "present" strength, including ships built and building, at approximately 375,000 tons. The combined strength of the two Continental navies (taking the French level in 1936 and the present Italian tonnage) falls short of the British tonnage by something over 60,000 tons. If the British figure is to be surpassed by 1936, therefore, France would be expected to build up to a total of 713,000 tons, and Italy to 440,000 tons. To reach this figure Italy would be required to build about 185,000 tons—125,000 for replacing old ships reaching the age limit before 1936, and 65,000 tons of new building. This would entail construction at the rate of 30,000 tons a year for Italy, and 40,000 tons a year for France. These figures are somewhat larger than the average annual tonnage laid down by either country in the past six years, but not as large as the tonnage laid down by Italy in 1929, or by France in 1927, as the following table shows:

#### TONNAGE LAID DOWN\*

Year	Italy	France
1924 .....	4,232	16,424
1925 .....	40,410	21,076
1926 .....	2,131	24,158
1927 .....	21,140	42,510
1928 .....	28,094	35,664
1929 .....	63,897†	28,956
Total (last 6 years) .....	159,904	168,788
Average annual total ....	26,650	28,130

\*Table derived from Great Britain, Admiralty, *Fleets (British Empire and Foreign Countries)*, Cmd. 3464, London, H. M. Stationery Office, 1929. According to M. Dumesnil's figures, the aggregate tonnage laid down by France and Italy from 1924 to November 1, 1929 is: for France, 157,700 tons; for Italy, 161,800 tons.

†Italy's "peak" year, 1929, saw the laying down of 4 cruisers of 10,000 tons, 2 of 5,000 tons, 8 destroyers of 1,200 tons and 7 submarines of 600 tons. Some of these ships were "held over" from the previous year.

There are indications, however, that the rate of building may be increased. Within two weeks after the signing of the treaty, the Italian government announced that it would lay down immediately 42,000 tons of new ships, including one 8-inch-gun cruiser, two 6-inch-gun cruisers, 4 destroyers and 22 submarines.<sup>28</sup> This program matches the French program almost ton for ton, and if renewed each year until 1936 will bring the combined tonnage of the two countries very close to the British level during the final year of the London treaty.

Actually to exceed the total tonnage allotted to Great Britain, however, both France and Italy would be required to complete and place in commission (not merely lay down) 40,000 tons each year. It requires from three to four years to complete a cruiser; two years or more to complete a destroyer leader, and about the same length of time to build a submarine. Thus very few of the ships laid down during the last two years by these countries would be in service during 1936. Excluding the ships in process of building (about 160,000 tons), the "effective" strength in modern completed ships would be: France, 673,000 tons; Italy, 410,000 tons. This gives a total of 1,083,000 tons for the combined Continental fleets, as compared with 1,151,450 tons for Great Britain. If obsolete ships are retained in service, the total tonnage will, of course, exceed the British figure. But obsolete tonnage has not in the past disturbed the British Admiralty. In modern effective ships, France and Italy will not surpass British

27. Revised estimate made public March 13, 1930; cf. *The Times* (London), March 14, 1930.

28. Associated Press dispatch from Rome, dated May 3, 1930.

tonnage levels even if they build at the high rate of 40,000 tons a year for the next six years.

In the vital categories of 8-inch-gun cruisers and submarines the combined strength of France and Italy will, without question, exceed that of Great Britain. At the present rate of building France will have at least 10 8-inch-gun cruisers and Italy may possibly have the same number. The submarine tonnage of the two Continental powers will be more than double the British tonnage. Whether this situation will "alarm" the British Admiralty is not known. At the present moment the combined strength of France and Italy is greater than that of Great Britain in both cruisers and destroyers. France alone has more submarines than the British Empire. Therefore, while the British government approved the three-power limitation figures, subject to the provisions of Article 21, it was impelled to state in a memorandum on the results of the treaty that "the figure of 150,000 tons of destroyers for the British Commonwealth of Nations must be conditional on an agreed destroyer and submarine strength of the European Powers represented at the London Conference. This will be the subject of further negotiations with the Powers concerned."<sup>29</sup>

#### POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS AFFECTING THE CLAUSE

Three further factors may be taken into account in estimating whether or not the treaty levels will be exceeded during the next six years. In the first place, in 1935, a year or more before the expiration of the London treaty, another naval conference will be called. And before 1935 it is probable that the General Disarmament Conference for which the League of Nations has been preparing the way will be convened. Germany, as the only great power which has

been disarmed, has shown a vital interest in the prompt calling of this general conference. Germany has intimated, in fact, that unless the General Disarmament Conference is held in the near future it will not consider itself bound by the military provisions of the Versailles Treaty.<sup>30</sup> Either one or both of these forthcoming disarmament conferences may alter the existing situation.

Although Prime Minister MacDonald's policy is based on the hope that there will be no occasion for invoking Article 21 of the London treaty, critical observers point out that a change of government in England might be followed by adoption of a different policy. Throughout the conference, leaders of the Conservative party expressed opposition to the reduction from 70 to 50 cruisers sanctioned by the Labour Cabinet, and viewed with alarm the size of the French and Italian building programs. During the debate in the House of Lords on May 8 two former First Lords of the Admiralty criticized the "dangerous" concessions made by the British delegation to the conference.<sup>31</sup> Should a Conservative government succeed the present Labour government, and should building by Continental powers continue at an alarming pace, the pressure to invoke Article 21 might easily become insistent.

On the other hand, there are important political factors which some British writers feel will militate against premature action under Article 21 of the London treaty. For Great Britain it would mean, they say, that the naval settlement reached with the United States after much painful effort would be upset, with a consequent disturbance of the political relations between the two countries. Observers of all shades of opinion agree that no British government could survive an act which threatened to stir up again the naval dispute of 1927.

29. Great Britain, Foreign Office, *Memorandum on the Results of the London Naval Conference*, Cmd. 3547, London, H. M. Stationery Office, 1930. No such reservation to the treaty was actually made, however.

30. For the speech of Foreign Minister Stresemann, cf. League of Nations, *Records of the Eighth Ordinary Session of the Assembly*, p. 160.

31. *The Times* (London), May 8, 1930.



## REDUCTION OR LIMITATION AT PRESENT LEVELS?

Do the tonnage levels established in the London Naval Treaty constitute actual reduction for the United States and the other powers? Several sets of figures have been produced by spokesmen of the administration to show different degrees of reduction achieved for this country. On April 11, President Hoover issued a statement to the press indicating his pleasure at the results obtained at London, and analyzing the amount of reduction achieved.<sup>32</sup> The basis of comparison chosen by President Hoover was the British offer made at the Geneva conference of 1927. Had the British proposals at that conference been accepted by the United States, this country would have been required to build a fleet of just over 1,400,000 tons, according to President Hoover's estimate. This fleet would have been composed of approximately the following ships:

Capital ships .....	525,000 tons
Aircraft carriers .....	135,000 "
Cruisers .....	450,000 "
Destroyers .....	250,000 "
Submarines .....	75,000 "
Total .....	1,435,000 tons

The tonnage allowed the United States under the London treaty is 1,123,600 tons. Compared with the British proposals at Geneva, therefore, the levels established at London show a reduction of about 312,000 tons.

The British proposals at Geneva, however, were not accepted by the United States because, among other reasons, they would have required an excessive amount of new building by the United States in order to achieve parity. They would have resulted in a material increase in the British as well as in the American fleet. Accordingly it is pointed out that this comparison, while it shows that the London conference was able to achieve limitation at a lower level than that proposed at Geneva, does not show the reduction below the existing fleet.

### STATE DEPARTMENT FIGURES

Additional figures, showing both the amount of reduction achieved by the treaty,

32. *New York Times*, April 12, 1930.

and the ratios of strength established for the three powers, were submitted by Secretary of State Stimson to the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate on May 13.<sup>33</sup> Mr. Stimson presented two tables showing the strength of "present fleets." The first was computed on the basis of ships built and building at the present time, and showed, for the United States, a total of 1,180,470 tons on December 31, 1929, or about 56,000 tons in excess of the tonnage permitted by 1936 under the London treaty.<sup>34</sup>

The second table submitted by Mr. Stimson computes the strength of present fleets on the basis of ships which are authorized or appropriated for, as well as built and building. For the United States this table gives a total tonnage on December 31, 1929 of 1,298,920 tons, about 175,000 tons more than the fleet permitted by the treaty. The figures include all of the 15 8-inch-gun cruisers authorized by Congress in 1929, as well as other authorized ships on which work has not yet begun or has just begun. For this reason, according to some commentators, it would be more accurate to substitute the term "projected strength" for "present strength" in describing Mr. Stimson's second table. Ships which are not yet built or even begun do not constitute a part of the effective combat fleet, which is made up of ships which are actually afloat at the time. Some go so far as to say that ships listed for disposal or out of commission should not be included in the computation of present strength. In the case of the United States, for example, more than 60,000 tons of destroyers and submarines are listed by the Navy Department for disposal, and an additional number of destroyers are out of commission. If these vessels are not counted in present strength, the total tonnage of the fleet falls below the tonnage permitted by the treaty. On the other hand, it is pointed out that ships out of commission are avail-

33. *Ibid.*, May 14, 1930.

34. To show this amount of reduction, Mr. Stimson included in the category of 8-inch-gun cruisers the three ships (30,000 tons) which were "suspended" by order of President Hoover during the negotiations with Prime Minister MacDonald last summer. Appropriations for beginning construction of these cruisers had been made, but it is pointed out that building had not begun on December 31, 1929, the date for which the table was prepared. If these ships are excluded from "present strength," the reduction achieved by the treaty drops from 56,000 to about 26,000 tons.

able for use, and, should the situation demand, could be quickly put into service.

The tables of strength of the American,

British and Japanese fleets submitted by Secretary Stimson to the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate follow:<sup>35</sup>

**PRESENT FLEETS (BUILT AND BUILDING)  
DECEMBER 31, 1929.**

	<i>United States</i>	<i>Great Britain</i>	<i>Japan</i>	<i>Ratios</i>
Capital ships .....	532,400	608,650	292,400	10:11.4: 5.5
Aircraft carriers .....	76,286	115,350	68,870	10:15.1: 9
Cruisers over 6-inch guns ...	130,000	186,226	108,400	10:14.3: 8.3
Cruisers 6-in. guns & under	70,500	177,685	98,415	10:25.2:13.9
Destroyers .....	290,304	184,371	122,575	10: 6.3: 4.2
Submarines .....	80,980	60,284	77,842	10: 7.4: 9.6
Total .....	1,180,470	1,332,566	768,502	10:11.3: 6.5

**PRESENT FLEETS (BUILT, UNDER AGE, BUILDING)  
APPROPRIATED FOR AND AUTHORIZED AS OF DECEMBER 31, 1929.**

	<i>United States</i>	<i>Great Britain</i>	<i>Japan</i>	<i>Ratios</i>
Capital ships .....	532,400	608,650	292,400	10:11.4: 5.5
Aircraft carriers .....	90,086	115,350	68,870	10:12.8: 7.6
Cruisers over 6-inch guns ...	230,000	186,226	108,400	10: 8.1: 4.7
Cruisers 6-inch guns .....	70,500	184,185	98,415	10:26.1:13.9
Destroyers .....	290,304	191,261	129,375	10: 6.5: 4.5
Submarines .....	85,630	63,324	77,842	10: 7.4: 9
Total .....	1,298,920	1,348,996	775,302	10:10.4: 6.0

**TREATY FLEET**

(If the United States does not exercise the option provided by Article 18 of the treaty for building only fifteen 8-inch-gun cruisers.)

	<i>United States</i>	<i>Great Britain</i>	<i>Japan</i>	<i>Ratios</i>
Capital ships .....	462,400	474,750	266,070	10:10.3: 5.8
Aircraft carriers .....	135,000	135,000	81,000	10:10 : 6
Cruisers over 6-inch guns ...	180,000	146,800	108,400	10: 8.1: 6
Cruisers 6-inch guns .....	143,500	192,200	100,450	10:13.4: 7
Destroyers .....	150,000	150,000	105,500	10:10 : 7
Submarines .....	52,700	52,700	52,700	10:10 :10
Total .....	1,123,600	1,151,450	714,120	10:10.2: 6.3

**TREATY FLEET**

(If the United States exercises the option provided in Article 18 of the treaty.)

	<i>United States</i>	<i>Great Britain</i>	<i>Japan</i>	<i>Ratios</i>
Capital ships .....	462,400	474,750	266,070	10:10.3: 5.8
Aircraft carriers .....	135,000	135,000	81,000	10:10 : 6
Cruisers over 6-inch guns ...	150,000	146,800	108,400	10: 9.8: 7.2
Cruisers 6-inch guns .....	189,000	192,200	100,450	10:10.2: 5.3
Destroyers .....	150,000	150,000	105,500	10:10 : 7
Submarines .....	52,700	52,700	52,700	10:10 :10
Total .....	1,139,100	1,151,450	714,120	10:10.1: 6.3

Note—The capital ship tonnage figures include 3,000 tons modernization each on three of the American capital ships that have not yet been modernized. Should the same modernization be carried out on the remaining five, about 15,800 tons would be added to the American total, or, in other words, the capital ship tonnage allotments would be:

<i>United States</i>	<i>Great Britain</i>	<i>Japan</i>	<i>Ratios</i>
477,400	474,750	266,070	10:9.9:5.6

35. Cf. *New York Times* and *New York Herald Tribune*, May 14, 1930.

### SAVING IN COST THROUGH BATTLESHIP HOLIDAY

Many estimates have been made showing the saving to be brought about by the battleship holiday. In his testimony before the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate Mr. Stimson put this saving at approximately \$400,000,000.<sup>36</sup> Representative Burton L. French, chairman of the House sub-Committee on Naval Appropriations, calculated that the amount saved would be nearer \$300,000,000. In a speech in the House on May 9, Mr. French stated that the cost of replacing five battleships completely and beginning replacement of five more would have amounted to \$281,250,000, on the basis of \$37,500,000 for each completed ship.<sup>37</sup> Since the annual cost of maintaining a capital ship is in the neighborhood of \$2,000,000, an additional saving of \$26,000,000 will be derived in respect of this item, on account of the scrapping of three battleships within 30 months of the coming into force of the treaty, instead of in 1934, as provided by the Washington treaty, when they would have been replaced by two new vessels.<sup>37a</sup>

Mr. French questions whether the non-expenditure of these sums can be counted as a direct "saving" and suggests that the expenditure has only been "postponed." Other commentators claim that even had there been no naval treaty, and no battleship holiday, there would still have been vigorous opposition in Congress to replacement of capital ships. This opposition would have come from quarters favoring a strong navy as well as from "little navy" senators, as the opinion is gaining strength that the huge 35,000-ton battleship is an inefficient, out-of-date instrument of war. At any rate, these critics contend, there is no sound basis for the assumption that the entire cost of replacing Washington conference battleships has been actually "saved."

### COST OF BUILDING UP TO TREATY LEVELS

The cost of building up to the treaty levels in cruisers, destroyers and submarines cannot be determined with precision; first, be-

cause construction costs are only approximate, secondly, because most of the building authorized by the treaty is optional, and not mandatory for the United States. Except in cruisers and aircraft carriers, whatever new building is done will be for the purpose of replacing old ships—that is, ships which have reached the age limits set by the treaty. The text of the treaty is specific on this point. Section I of Annex I states: "The right of replacement is not lost by delay in laying down replacement tonnage."

There is already evident a division of opinion in Congress over the question of whether the maximum levels permitted by the treaty should be built up to the last ton by 1936. Congressman Fred Britten, chairman of the House Naval Affairs Committee, and a leader of the "big navy" group, has already drafted a bill to bring the navy up to the maximum level permitted under the treaty. Congressman Burton L. French has publicly favored a "conservative" building program.

Mr. Britten's bill<sup>38</sup> reveals the approximate cost of building to the maximum limits. It would call for an estimated outlay of approximately \$500,000,000 by 1940, which, added to the cost of ships already authorized, would bring the total building cost to roughly \$936,000,000.

The maximum tonnage which the United States is permitted to lay down during the term of the treaty, including replacements, is as follows:

Category	Tons
Cruisers	
8-inch-guns <sup>39</sup> .....	
6-inch-guns (new ships) .....	73,500
Destroyers (all replacement) .....	150,000
Submarines (all replacement) .....	44,580
Aircraft carriers (new ships and one replacement) .....	45,000
Total .....	313,080

In the cruiser class, the United States has at the present time 10 6-inch-gun ships of the *Omaha* class which were finished between 1923 and 1925. Their total tonnage is 70,500. Under the act of 1924, 8 8-inch-gun, 10,000-ton cruisers have been built or are nearing completion. The last three of

36. *Ibid.*

37. Speech on the naval appropriation bill for 1931, *Congressional Record*, May 9, 1930, p. 9010.

37a. This saving of \$26,000,000 is calculated on the basis of \$6,000,000 per annum on three ships from 1932 to 1934 inclusive, and \$4,000,000 per annum on two replacement ships for 1935 and 1936.

38. 71st Congress, 2nd Session, H. R. 12283.

39. 180,000 tons have already been authorized by Congress.

these ships are expected to be completed in March 1931. Under the act of February 13, 1929, 15 more 8-inch-gun, 10,000-ton cruisers are authorized. The first block of five ships was appropriated for last year. Two ships were laid down, and three held up by President Hoover pending the outcome of the conference. The appropriation bill for 1931, now before Congress, provides for the laying down of the three ships, and for preliminary work on the second block of five.<sup>40</sup> The third block of five will be dropped if the London treaty is ratified, as the maximum number of 8-inch-gun cruisers already has been appropriated for. In place of this last block of five, the United States is free to build 73,500 tons of new 6-inch-gun cruisers, of any size up to 10,000 tons. The estimated cost of building these new ships is \$132,000,000. The cost of building the first two blocks of 8-inch-gun ships is \$164,000,000.

In addition, as pointed out above, the treaty would permit the United States to lay the keels of two ships to replace the *Omaha* and the *Milwaukee*, which were laid down before 1920 and therefore will become "obsolete" in sixteen years instead of twenty.

The cost of building the full tonnage permitted in aircraft carriers is estimated roughly at \$93,000,000. The United States has two carriers, the *Lexington* and the *Saratoga*, of 33,000 tons each, and another ship, the *Langley*, of 10,286 tons, which will

become obsolete before 1936. One new carrier of 13,800 tons was authorized in the 1929 act. The United States is therefore entitled to build 55,000 tons, including replacement of the *Langley*.

In destroyers the United States has at the present time 284 ships (290,000 tons). This entire fleet will become obsolete under the terms of the treaty. If the full tonnage allowed by the treaty should be replaced, the cost would approach \$300,000,000. In view of the fact that many of these ships will not have exceeded the formerly accepted age limit and will be in relatively good condition, there will be strong opposition in Congress to full replacement. The question of parity is not involved, it is pointed out, as many of the British destroyers will also be approaching the age limits by that time.

In submarines the United States has at the present time a total of 84,000 tons built and building. Sixty-two thousand tons will become obsolete under the treaty definitions before 1936. This means that 22,000 tons will still be "under age." Of this 22,000 tons, however, all but three ships, totaling 8,120 tons, will be "obsolete" by 1939. And as the treaty permits the parties to "anticipate" replacements due in 1937, 1938 and 1939, the United States is free to lay down the full submarine quota of 52,700 tons, less only the three ships now building—a replacement tonnage of 44,580.

### DOES THE TREATY PROVIDE PARITY?

The strongest opposition to ratification of the London treaty has come from "big navy" members of Congress who contend that parity with Great Britain has not been assured, particularly in the category of cruisers. This group claims that the American delegation, by limiting the number of 8-inch-gun cruisers to 18, prevented the United States from building the one type of cruiser which is suited to its needs, and agreed to construct a type suited rather to the needs of Great Britain. They point to the fact that after the Geneva conference of 1927 the American naval experts advocated building

a large number of 10,000-ton, 8-inch-gun ships. This type, and this type alone, they said, would give the American navy the cruising radius and the gun power needed for adequate defense. On the advice of naval experts, Congress provided for the building of 15 new 10,000-ton cruisers in 1929, which, added to the 10 already building, would bring the total to 23 ships with 8-inch guns. If the big-gun cruiser was essential to American needs in 1929, why is it not essential in 1930? This, in effect, is the question asked by Mr. Britten and Senator Hale, chief critics of the treaty.

Mr. Stimson, in his testimony before the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate

40. \$30,000,000 has been appropriated for the first five cruisers, and \$200,000 for the second block of five. Cf. Navy Department and Navy Service Appropriation Bill, Fiscal Year 1931, p. 25.



on May 13, defended the settlement reached at London, and declared that it provided for full parity. He pointed out, first, that the 8-inch-gun cruiser had never been tested in action, and, secondly, that there are many functions for cruisers, some of which can be performed by 8-inch-gun and some by 6-inch-gun vessels. He intimated that the delegation had reached the conclusion that it would be a mistake to "put all our eggs in one basket."<sup>41</sup>

A further advantage he saw in the London agreement was the fact that the United States gains not only parity in the type of cruiser favored by the General Board of the Navy, but retains the same relative superiority over the British building program that the American building program in large cruisers provided before the conference met. At that time the United States had planned to build 23 8-inch-gun cruisers; Great Britain had built and building 18 8-inch-gun ships and four more 9,950-ton, 7.5-inch-gun vessels—a total of 22 cruisers with guns having a calibre in excess of 6 inches. Under the treaty Great Britain is to scrap these four 7.5-inch-gun cruisers and retain only 15 8-inch-gun ships, as compared with 18 for the United States. In addition, Mr. Stimson declared, the United States is permitted a larger ratio in the 6-inch-gun class.

The extent to which the British government receded from the position which it took at Geneva in 1927—both by reducing the number of ships it demanded, and by permitting an increase in the size of individual 6-inch-gun cruisers up to 10,000 tons—has been shown above.

Secretary of the Navy Charles Francis Adams and Admiral Pratt, naval adviser to the delegation at London, both defended the cruiser settlement and testified before the Senate committee that parity in the two combat fleets had been achieved. They indicated that the "modernization" of American battleships, on which about \$30,000,000 has been spent in the past few years, will be completed shortly, so that the American and British battleships will be equal not only in numbers, but in combat strength. The United States, for example, will have 24

guns of 16-inch calibre to 18 for Great Britain. The *Rodney* and the *Nelson* are the only two British battleships which mount 16-inch guns. The United States will have three capital ships, the *West Virginia*, the *Colorado*, and the *Maryland*, with 16-inch guns. Furthermore, the United States fleet will have a total of 136 big guns (mostly 14-inch calibre) as compared with 98 big guns (15-inch calibre) for the British. Admiral Pratt testified that in his opinion the American battle fleet would be at least the equal of the British battle fleet.<sup>42</sup>

That other high ranking naval officers do not agree with Admiral Pratt was first revealed in the Senate committees by Rear-Admiral Hilary P. Jones, who was a delegate to the Geneva conference in 1927 and an adviser to the American delegation in London, and by Rear-Admiral Mark L. Bristol. Both Admirals implied that a majority of the General Board of the Navy preferred 8-inch-gun cruisers to 6-inch-gun cruisers, and that the requirements of the navy would not be met by 18 of the latter, the maximum permitted under the treaty. In effect, they declared that the terms of the treaty did not give the United States parity with Great Britain and that it increased the relative strength of Japan.<sup>43</sup>

Secretary Stimson and other members of the delegation told the Senate committees that it was quite impossible to take into account factors such as the size of the British merchant marine or the number of naval bases in determining "parity." Certain senators had suggested that as long as Great Britain retained a large merchant-ship tonnage suitable for conversion in wartime, the United States would not be its equal on the seas. The delegates replied that agreement could never have been reached if these factors had been introduced. For example, Great Britain could have raised the question of its insular position, the length of its trade routes and many other factors to show why the British fleet should exceed that of the United States. The only practical way to measure navies, they believed, was to limit "combat strength." This was accomplished at London.

<sup>42</sup> *New York Times*, May 15, 1930; testimony before the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, May 17, 1930.

<sup>41</sup> *New York Times*, May 14, 1930.

The London treaty was also the subject of bitter attack from big navy advocates in Great Britain and Japan. During the debates in the House of Commons on May 15, Mr. Winston Churchill criticized the agreement on the ground that it gave the United

States superiority over Great Britain.<sup>44</sup> In Japan, the government was meeting opposition from the naval general staff, led by Admiral Kanji Kato, who charged that the Japanese delegation at London had made damaging concessions to the United States.<sup>45</sup>

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44. *Ibid.*, May 16, 1930.

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45. *Ibid.*, May 17, 1930.